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SCHOOL INTEGRATION AND ITS RELATION TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF NEGROES IN U.S. CITIES.

BY- BOUCHER, BERTRAND P. BROOKS, HUGH C.

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A LOOK AT THE CONCENTRATION AND DISPERSION OF NEGROES IN THE CENSUS TRACTS OF NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN CITIES REVEALS THAT NEGRO RESIDENTIAL CONCENTRATION IS MORE THAN TWICE AS HEAVY IN THE NORTH. MORE THAN HALF OF THE NEGROES LIVING NORTH OF THE MASON-DIXON LINE ARE CROWDED INTO ONE-TWENTIETH OF THE CENSUS TRACTS, WHILE IN THE SOUTH LESS THAN HALF LIVE IN OVER ONE-TENTH OF THE CITIES' TRACTS. THE "BREAKING POINT"--THE ALLOWABLE MINIMUM OF AN UNDESIRABLE GROUP--FOR MOST NORTHERN NEIGHBORHOODS COMES WHEN 10 PERCENT OF THE FAMILIES LIVING THERE ARE NEGRO. SOUTHERN CITIES ARE MORE RACIALLY MIXED, BUT STREET FRONTAGE IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS IS USUALLY WHITE-OWNED. FAR FEWER THAN ONE OUT OF FIVE NORTHERN SCHOOLS ARE REALLY INTEGRATED. A GREAT DEAL OF SCHOOL TRANSFERRING WOULD BE NECESSARY TO INTEGRATE THE OTHERS, AND FEW CITIES HAVE ATTEMPTED THIS. THE SOUTH, BECAUSE OF MORE INTEGRATED NEIGHBORHOODS, FACES [illegible] PROBLEM OF BRIDGING THE SCHOLASTIC GAP BETWEEN THE RACES. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN THE "EDUCATIONAL FORUM," VOLUME 24, NUMBER 2, JANUARY 1960. (AF)

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School Integration and Its Relation to the Distribution of Negroes in U.S. Cities

BERTRAND P. BOUCHER AND HUGH C. BROOKS

I

THE STEADY stream of southern Negro migration into Northern urban centers is now an established fact in mid-century America. Attracted by war-spurred industrial developments in the North, the rural poor and the unskilled townsmen moved in large numbers to destinations north of the Mason and Dixon line— a fact substantiated by the 1950 Census returns. From 1940 to 1950, the nonwhite segment of the population in northern cities increased in almost geometric proportions: Boston, 69%; Buffalo, 106%; Chicago, 80%; Cleveland, 76%; Columbus, 31%; Los Angeles, 116%; Philadelphia, 50%; Trenton, 56%. Significantly, during this same decade the number of whites in most of these cities either decreased or registered but a slight growth.

That this migration was not wholly a war-born phenomenon is evidenced by the greater inflow of nonwhites into northern cities since 1950. It is estimated that New York City has a net in-migration of 10,000 Negroes annually, while close to 50,000 whites are leaving the city each year. If this movement continues, nonwhites will number 1,000,000, or 50% of Manhattan's population within another decade. This trend is being repeated in other northern metropolitan centers. In Chicago the Negro population is increasing at the rate of 30,000—35,000 annually. Approximately 6,500 Negroes have been moving into Cleveland each year since WW II, while the white population has been decreasing at the rate of 3,000 per year. In 1939, Negroes accounted for 10% of the population of St. Louis, today 30% of the people are negroid.

At present, one discovers no concerted action on the part of northern cities to assimilate this American but "alien" group. Rather the nonwhites are crowded into the older residential areas of the city, into the tenements and cold water flats which are located on the periphery of most central business districts. Forced to live in already congested areas, Negroes, occasionally, are able to push through some weak sector of the hostile white wall which surround these 20th century American "ghettos." Although we have always had colored districts in our large northern centers, they were, for the most part, limited in area and with a small population.

Obviously, this shift of population will result in complex social, economic and political problems. Problems which we are now beginning to encounter in

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see p. 185

their incipient stage. If this migration trend continues, most of our northern cities will soon be dominated by nonwhite majorities.

Until such time as our metropolises, if ever, become nonwhite centers, a pattern of Negro distribution is evolving which is unique to the North. Whatever the cause, *housing discrimination in the North is as real as socio-economic discrimination in the South.* As a result, one finds nonwhites being confined in ever greater numbers to particular sections or neighborhoods of each city. Deprived of an opportunity to establish themselves in desirable residential areas, Northern Negroes are becoming both the product and the cause of slums. This form of *apartheid* creates black belts which are often more pronounced than those in Southern cities.

The North, by its segregation pattern, has found that one aspect of the racial problem—school integration—has in many cases been solved geographically; a solution brought about by the homogeneous concentration of races within school districts. In the South, there is a wider dispersion of Negroes throughout the city; consequently, school districts being racially divergent make integration difficult to achieve within the existing social pattern.

II

In an effort to measure and analyze these regional differences, the writers have made a detailed study of the distribution of Negroes in a number of American urban centers. For the purpose of this analysis, cities were grouped geographically as northern or southern. Western cities were omitted because of their small Negro populations, although they exhibit the same distributional characteristics of their eastern cousins.

The Census Bureau in cooperation with local committees has subdivided 62 American cities into small areas called census tracts. Containing a population normally ranging from 3,000 to 6,000, these "tract areas are established with a view to approximate uniformity in population, with some consideration of uniformity in size, and with due regard for natural features. *Each tract is designed to include an area fairly homogeneous in population characteristics.*"* (Italics are our own.)

Census tracts, thus, are the best resources in the study of population characteristics of U.S. cities. In most cases corresponding to what planners call neighborhoods, census tracts enable us to study and measure the distribution aspects of many social and economic factors.

Using these tracts as a base, the authors found a marked difference in the distribution of Negroes within cities in the various sections of the country. In every southern urban center Negroes are found in at least 97% of the tracts, and in 5 cities Negroes are residing in every tract, the regional average for the listed cities being 98%. As shown in Table I, the distribution in the North ranges from 55% in Syracuse to a high of 96% in Columbus. The regional average is 12 percentage points lower than it is in the

* U.S. Census Bureau, *Census Tract Bulletins*, Washington, D.C.

TABLE I. COMPOSITION OF CENSUS TRACTS IN THE NORTH

	Total number of tracts in city	Number of tracts with Negroes	Percent of tracts with Negroes	Percent of tracts with 6 or more Negroes	Percent of tracts 10% or more Negroid
Column A	B	C	D	E	F
Boston	156	136	87	59	10
Buffalo	72	65	90	49	11
Cleveland	206	171	83	55	24
Columbus	61	59	96	87	29
Flint	41	37	90	34	12
Indianapolis	110	100	90	60	27
Paterson	31	29	93	71	13
Pittsburgh	194	179	92	79	25
Syracuse	61	36	55	29	5
Northern Cities			86	58	17

South. The writers also discovered that many northern tracts contained only 1, 2 or 3 Negroes, who for the most part were usually middle aged and of the same sex. Undoubtedly, these represent domestics living-in, who pose no serious threat to the existing social order. To bring into sharper focus the differing and regional distribution pattern by removing those extraneous tracts which contain either a few domestics or possibly an anomalous family or two, the writers eliminated all of the tracts containing 5 or fewer Negroes. The results were quite striking. In the North the regional average declined 28 percentage points while in the South the decline was only 4 percentage points. Cleveland, with a greater Negro population than any southern city, except New Orleans, has 45 percent of its neighborhoods or tracts completely or almost completely free of Negroes. In the South 87 to 100% of the tracts can be classified as racially mixed. Columbus, Ohio, is the only northern city which approaches the Southern racial distribution patterns.

III

Sociologists often make use of the breaking point concept of a neighborhood. This is the allowable minimum to which older residents of an area will permit an invasion by what they feel is an undesirable group. When the invaders are well below this point or limit there is no real challenge to neighborhood values. However, as "alien" numbers approach this theoretical limit, property owners through social and a-legal methods attempt to stem the influx. Once this limit is reached or surpassed, panic often ensues and most long settled residents will evacuate the neighborhood or even the city itself.

In the North as a whole, it may be assumed that most neighborhoods will reach the breaking point when 10% of the families are Negro. However, according to Column F, Table I, this does not seem to hold true for the South. More than one-half of the neighborhoods have from 10 to 100% colored inhabitants, while in the North only 17% of the tracts fall into this category.

TABLE II. COMPOSITION OF CENSUS TRACTS IN THE SOUTH

	Total number of tracts in city	Number of tracts with Negroes	Percent of tracts with Negroes	Percent of tracts with 6 or more Negroes	Percent of tracts 10% or more Negroid
Column A	B	C	D	E	F
Atlanta	75	73	97	88	46
Birmingham	58	58	100	97	69
Chattanooga	30	30	100	93	50
Durham	14	14	100	100	64
Greensboro	16	16	100	93	43
Memphis	90	90	100	99	62
Nashville	40	39	97	93	63
New Orleans	142	139	98	92	59
Richmond	61	60	98	87	50
Southern Cities			98	94	56

The racially mixed character of the southern city is no doubt a product of history and tradition. In all justice to Northerners, it should be pointed out that street frontage of many Southern residential areas is white owned; but back lots, alleys, and the cores of city blocks are set aside for Negroes, many of whom are former domestics. Nevertheless, the 10% breaking point seems to be a legitimate social principle when *applied to the North*: Table I reveals that the range is from 3 tracts (5%) in Syracuse to 18 tracts (29%) in Columbus. As further proof, it will be demonstrated below (see Tables II and III) that most of these "10%" Northern tracts are almost solidly Negroid. Yet in the South, in spite of some heavily populated Negro belts, the simple truth remains that residential areas are more apt to be heterogeneous than homogeneous: the range being from 8 tracts (48%) in Greensboro to 40 tracts (69%) in Birmingham.

If it is assumed that each tract has its own elementary school, less than 20% of these schools in Northern cities would draw from a noticeably mixed racial population. Therefore, for four out

TABLE III. CONCENTRATION OF NEGROES IN CERTAIN AMERICAN CITIES, NORTH AND SOUTH

	% of tracts containing 50% of Negro population		% of tracts containing 50% of Negro population
Northern Cities		*Southern Cities*	
Boston	3	Greensboro	12
Buffalo	2	Nashville	15
Cleveland	6	Richmond	18
Columbus	8	Atlanta	12
Flint	5	Birmingham	20
Indianapolis	7	Chattanooga	10
Kansas City	5	Durham	21
Omaha	5	Memphis	15
Paterson	8	New Orleans	13
Pittsburgh	6		
St. Louis	4		
Syracuse	6		

of five northern schools integration is a phantom problem since they would be serving predominantly white neighborhoods. The net result is that far fewer than one out of five schools are in reality integrated. Some cities, like Manhattan, to overcome the existing geographic segregation pattern have plans to move students from one end of the city to the other in an effort to have each school enjoy integration. If every school is to have the racial composition of the whole city, a tremendous amount of cross-hauling will be entailed as school administrators try to overcome the inequalities created by the zoning restrictions of real estate groups and City Hall.

Any effort to comply with the ruling of the Supreme Court will see more than a majority of the schools in southern cities affected. Therefore, as the South moves toward school integration, at least 50-60% of her urban elementary schools will have 10% or more Negroes enrolled. In fact, with the given nonwhite distribution in southern cities, almost all public schools can expect to include some Negro students. This is certainly a far cry from existing northern conditions.

Table II is a measure of the concentration of Negroes in certain U.S. cities. Beginning with the leading Negro tract, populationwise, the authors computed the number of tracts required to secure 50% of the Negro population. The smaller the figure the greater the concentration. We see, then, that in Boston, 50% of the nonwhites are found in only 3% of that city's tracts. We can assume that the remaining Negroes are either (a) scattered throughout 97% of the city; or (b) are somewhat dispersed throughout

TABLE IV. COMPARISONS NORTH AND SOUTH

City	Percent of total Negro population in the 4 leading Negro tracts	Percent of total tracts in city
Atlanta	32	5
Birmingham	42	7
Chattanooga	58	13
Durham	66	29
Greensboro	87	25
Memphis	18	4
Nashville	40	10
New Orleans	14	3
Richmond	25	6
Southern Cities	42	11
Boston	45	2
Buffalo	78	6
Cleveland	18	2
Columbus	49	6
Flint	88	10
Indianapolis	33	3
Kansas City	39	3
Paterson	67	13
Pittsburgh	25	2
Syracuse	92	6
Northern Cities	53	5

a few other tracts. The evidence at hand indicates the latter situation to be true. (See Tables I and III.) In either case, white Bostonians cannot feel that their political, social, and economic institutions are threatened. In Birmingham or Durham, on the other hand, over 1/5 th or the census tracts must be considered before half of the Negro population can be counted—a considerable and significant difference.

To further focus attention upon this regional characteristic of concentration and dispersion, the writers selected the top four Negro tracts in each city in order to find the percentage of total Negroes contained therein. The result can be found in Table III. All indications point to a definite tendency to crowd Negroes into specific sections of Northern cities. Thus 6% of the tracts in Rich-

mond have only one-quarter of that city's colored population; while the same proportion of tracts in Syracuse contains 92%; Buffalo, 78%; and Columbus 49% of the total Negro population. Cleveland has concentrated 18% or 26,612 of its 147,847 Negroes into 2% of the census tracts, whereas New Orleans with 181,775 Negroes concentrates 14% or 25,448 in 3% of its areal subdivisions. Utilizing regional averages, one finds that Negro residential concentration is more than twice as great in the North. The effect is to crowd more than half of the colored race into 1/20th of the tracts north of the Mason and Dixon line, while in the South less than half live in over 1/10th of the cities' tracts.

IV

It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the reasons for this regional difference in race distribution, but merely to point them out. The implications to be drawn are many and cannot be ignored in any serious proposal to deal with one of the nation's most perplexing problems. It should be obvious, even to the uninitiated, that school desegregation in the South will be a more serious problem than was considered at first blush.

As a result of the geographic distribution of Negroes, integration in any large southern city will affect almost all public school classes from kindergarten through the high school. This is not the case in the North. Because "black belts" have developed in northern cities, many elementary and high schools will not have any large scale racial integration for some time to come, unless, like Manhattan, it is attempted artificially.

In this era of increasing Russian competition, the South, along with the rest of the nation, will be hard pressed to maintain and expand education so that all children—of whatever color—will have an opportunity to contribute to the social and economic advancement of the U.S. Unfortunately, the South's problems will be compounded; for in the short run all Southerners will have to pay a higher price. Integration, with all its attendant frustrations and maladjustments, will mean a stepping up of the Negroes academically, and a slowing down of the whites so that the 2-3 year scholastic gap which exists between the races can be breached. With 30-40% of their population Negroid and widely dispersed at that, Southern city fathers and school administrators face difficult situations which must be resolved.

What of the North? The rapidly growing Negro communities cannot be expected to remain contented with their slum neighborhoods. Unless Negroes are given residential as well as socio-economic freedoms, Northerners will inherit unexpected storms of protest, bitterness and possibly violence. No region or section of our nation should boast of its record in the treatment of minority groups. The South refuses to do anything about it and the North prefers to ignore the problem.

Not only is school integration the law of the land, but it is one of the best methods by which America can utilize to the maximum its greatest resource—the American people.